







**BIASING CIRCUITRY FOR GENERATING  
BIAS CURRENT INSENSITIVE TO PROCESS,  
TEMPERATURE AND SUPPLY VOLTAGE  
VARIATIONS**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to biasing circuitry for generating stable biasing signals and in particular, to biasing circuitry for generating and maintaining substantially constant output bias currents notwithstanding variations in circuit fabrication processes, power supply voltage, and operating temperature.

2. Description of the Related Art

Amplifier operating efficiency is important in virtually all circuit applications. However, this is particularly true for power amplifiers in radio frequency (RF) circuit applications, especially for mobile devices. In many such applications, particularly for mobile devices, such circuitry will often be required to operate over variations in temperature and power supply voltages. Further, variations in the fabrication or other manufacturing processes in producing such circuitry can also induce undesirable variations in operating characteristics.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Biasing circuitry in accordance with the presently claimed invention generates and maintains a substantially constant output bias current. Ratios of selected bias currents and selected transistor sizes ensure that a nominal, or average, load current is maintained notwithstanding variations in circuit fabrication processes, power supply voltage and operating temperature.

In accordance with one embodiment of the presently claimed invention, biasing circuitry for generating and maintaining a substantially constant output bias current notwithstanding variations in circuit fabrication processes, power supply voltage and operating temperature includes first current replication circuitry, second current replication circuitry and a reference transistor. The first current replication circuitry receives a reference current having a magnitude  $I_{ref}$  and in response thereto generates a bias signal and a first replica current having a magnitude  $N \cdot I_{ref}$ . The second current replication circuitry, coupled to the first current replication circuitry, receives the bias signal and in response thereto generates a branch current having a magnitude  $I_b$  and a second replica current having a magnitude  $M \cdot I_b$ . The reference transistor, coupled to the first and second current replication circuitry, receives the branch current as an input current and conducts the first replica current as an output current.

In accordance with another embodiment of the presently claimed invention, biasing circuitry for generating and maintaining a substantially constant output bias current notwithstanding variations in circuit fabrication processes, power supply voltage and operating temperature includes first current replicator means, second current replicator means and reference transistor means. The first current replicator means is for receiving a reference current having a magnitude  $I_{ref}$  and in response thereto generating a bias signal and a first replica current having a magnitude  $N \cdot I_{ref}$ . The second current replicator means is for receiving the bias signal and in response thereto generating a branch current having a magnitude  $I_b$  and a second replica current having

a magnitude  $M \cdot I_b$ . The reference transistor means is for receiving the branch current as an input current and conducting the first replica current as an output current.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The FIGURE illustrates a schematic diagram of biasing circuitry in accordance with one embodiment of the presently claimed invention providing a consistent bias current for a power amplifier circuit.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE  
INVENTION

The following detailed description is of example embodiments of the presently claimed invention with references to the accompanying drawings. Such description is intended to be illustrative and not limiting with respect to the scope of the present invention. Such embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to practice the subject invention, and it will be understood that other embodiments may be practiced with some variations without departing from the spirit or scope of the subject invention.

Throughout the present disclosure, absent a clear indication to the contrary from the context, it will be understood that individual circuit elements as described may be singular or plural in number. For example, the terms "circuit" and "circuitry" may include either a single component or a plurality of components, which are either active and/or passive and are connected or otherwise coupled together to provide the described function. Additionally, the term "signal" may refer to one or more currents, one or more voltages, or a data signal. Within the drawings, like or related elements will have like or related alpha, numeric or alphanumeric designators.

Referring to the FIGURE, one embodiment **10** of biasing circuitry in accordance with the presently claimed invention provides a substantially constant output bias current  $I_{bias}$  for use by power amplifier circuitry **12** to maintain a substantially constant nominal, or average, load current  $I_{load}$ . This biasing circuitry **10** includes current replication circuitry formed by P-type metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistors (P-MOSFETs) **M1** and **M2**, further current replication circuitry formed by P-MOSFETs **M3** and **M4**, and a reference transistor in the form of bipolar junction transistor (BJT) **X1**.

The first current replication circuitry **M1**, **M2** is a classic current mirror circuit that uses an input reference current  $I_{ref}$  provided by a reference current source  $I_{refs}$  which can be produced by using a conventional stable reference signal source (e.g., a bandgap voltage reference as is well known in the art). This input reference current  $I_{ref}$  is replicated by transistors **M1** and **M2** to produce a replica current  $I_c$  at the drain terminal of transistor **M1**. The channel of transistor **M1** has a width-to-length ratio  $N \cdot W_1/L_1$  that is N-times that  $W_1/L_1$  of transistor **M2**. Accordingly, the replica current  $I_c$  produced by transistor **M1** is N-times the magnitude of the reference current  $I_{ref}$ , or  $I_c = N \cdot I_{ref}$ .

The direct connection of the drain and gate terminals of transistor **M1** (which is diode-connected) forms a circuit node having a relatively low impedance (at signal frequencies due to the gate-to-source junction of transistor **M1** between such connection and signal ground at the power supply terminal **VDD**), thereby introducing a high frequency pole in the overall circuit transfer function. Conversely, the high impedance node formed at the connection between the drain terminal of transistor **M2** and the reference current



source Irefs introduces a low frequency pole. Compensation (with respect to gain and phase margins) for this high impedance node is provided by the inherent gate-to-source capacitance  $C_{gs}$  of transistors **M3** and **M4** (discussed in more detail below).

With conduction by transistor **M2** of the reference current  $I_{ref}$ , a bias voltage  $V_{bias}$  is produced at the drain terminal of transistor **M2**. This bias voltage  $V_{bias}$  drives the commonly connected gate terminals of P-MOSFETs **M3** and **M4**. Transistor **M4** has a channel with a width-to-length ratio  $M \cdot W_2/L_2$  that is  $M$ -times that  $W_2/L_2$  of transistor **M3**. With this commonly applied bias voltage  $V_{bias}$  at their gate terminals, transistors **M3** and **M4** produce drain currents  $I_{base}$  and  $I_{bias}$ , respectively, having magnitudes with a ratio of  $I_{base}:I_{bias}=1:M$ .

The current  $I_{base}$  produced by transistor **M3** provides the necessary base current for the reference transistor **X1**. The drain current  $I_{bias}$  produced by transistor **M4** provides the base current for the output transistor **X2** in the output amplifier circuitry **12**. This output transistor **X2**, also a BJT, is  $M$ -times as large as the reference transistor **X1** (preferably formed by connecting  $M$  transistors in parallel, each of which is equal in size and manufacturing method(s) to the reference transistor **X1**). Accordingly, due to the ratio  $N$  between transistors **M1** and **M2** and the ratio  $M$  between transistors **M4** and **M3**, the load current  $I_{load}$  produced by the output transistor **X2** is  $M \cdot N$  times as large as the reference current  $I_{ref}$ , or  $I_{load}=M \cdot N \cdot I_{ref}$ .

The input RF signal  $V_{IN}$  is applied to the base of the output transistor **X2** through a series coupling capacitor  $C_{coupling}$ . The load circuitry, represented by an inductive circuit element  $L_{load}$ , is connected to the power supply terminal **VDD** and is driven by the load current  $I_{load}$  via the collector terminal of transistor **X2**.

At the RF frequencies of the input signal  $V_{IN}$ , the inherent gate-to-drain  $C_{gd}$  and gate-to-source  $C_{gs}$  capacitances of transistor **M4** begin to decline in impedance and approach a short circuit between the drain terminal of transistor **M4** and circuit signal ground at the power supply terminal **VDD**. To prevent the base terminal of transistor **X2** from thereby also becoming shorted to circuit ground, a resistor **R1** having a resistance value  $R_{match}$  is included to ensure a sufficient impedance is maintained between the input signal node at the base of transistor **X2** and circuit signal ground at the power supply terminal **VDD**. The value  $R_{match}$  of this resistor **R1** should be selected to properly terminate the base of the output transistor **X2** at the frequency of interest for maximum operating efficiency (e.g., typically 50 ohms). As will be readily understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, the introduction of this resistive element **R1** will also introduce a parasitic capacitance  $C_{match}$  which should be taken into account when tuning the value  $R_{match}$  of this resistance **R1**.

This parasitic capacitance  $C_{match}$  plays an important role in establishing immunity of circuit operation from variations in the power supply voltage **VDD**, often referred to as power supply rejection ration (PSRR). As noted above, at higher frequencies, the inherent gate-to-drain  $C_{gd}$  and gate-to-source  $C_{gs}$  capacitances of transistor **M4** decline in impedance and can effectively short the drain terminal of transistor **M4** to circuit signal ground at the power supply terminal **VDD**. This causes the base terminal of transistor **X2** to become more closely coupled to the power supply terminal **VDD** via resistor **R1** rather than being relatively isolated by the operation of transistor **M4**. In turn, this causes the PSRR to degrade since voltage variations, including noise, present

on the power supply terminal **VDD** become more likely to be passed through and possibly amplified by the operation of transistor **X2**.

Accordingly, when introducing resistor **R1** and, therefore, its parasitic capacitance  $C_{match}$ , such capacitance  $C_{match}$  should be designed (in accordance with well known techniques) to be sufficiently large so as to cause its impedance to predominate over the impedance of the effective capacitance of the series combination of the gate-to-drain  $C_{gd}$  and gate-to-source  $C_{gs}$  capacitances of transistor **M4**. With a sufficiently high value of capacitance  $C_{match}$ , high frequency signals, such as noise, arriving via the power supply terminal **VDD** will be more effectively shunted to circuit ground through such capacitance  $C_{match}$  rather than be passed through and possibly amplified by transistor **X2**, thereby maintaining a higher PSRR.

In a related manner, and to improve matching of drain currents  $I_{base}$  and  $I_{bias}$  of transistors **M3** and **M4**, respectively, another resistor **R2** having a resistance value  $M \cdot R_{match}$  can be included. This will ensure that equal voltage drops will appear across these resistors **R1**, **R2**, thereby ensuring that the base terminals of the reference **X1** and output **X2** transistors operate at equal voltages with respect to circuit ground.

Based upon the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that biasing circuitry in accordance with the presently claimed invention advantageously minimizes sensitivity to variations in circuit fabrication processes and operating temperature. For example, by maintaining a constant base current for the output transistor (e.g., as opposed to buffering its base-to-emitter bias voltage) and maintaining equal emitter voltages (both at circuit ground potential) and equal base voltages, the load current  $I_{load}$  is dependent virtually only on the selected ratios  $N$ ,  $M$  for the various currents and transistor sizes. Such ratios are independent of and unaffected by variations in circuit or device fabrication processes as well as supply voltage and operating temperature. Accordingly, even though the collector voltages of the reference **X1** and output **X2** transistors may vary with power supply voltage **VDD**, as well as effects of variations in fabrication processes or operating temperature, the parameters of significance, i.e., the bias currents  $I_{ref}$ ,  $I_c$ ,  $I_{load}$  will not be affected.

Various other modifications and alternations in the structure and method of operation of this invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and the spirit of the invention. Although the invention has been described in connection with specific preferred embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as claimed should not be unduly limited to such specific embodiments. It is intended that the following claims define the scope of the present invention and that structures and methods within the scope of these claims and their equivalents be covered thereby.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus including biasing circuitry for generating and maintaining a substantially constant output bias current notwithstanding variations in circuit fabrication processes, power supply voltage and operating temperature, comprising:
  - first current replication circuitry that receives a reference current having a magnitude  $I_{ref}$  and in response thereto generates a bias signal, and a first replica current having a magnitude  $N \cdot I_{ref}$ ;
  - second current replication circuitry, coupled to said first current replication circuitry, that receives said bias signal and in response thereto generates



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- a branch current having a magnitude  $I_b$ , and  
 a second replica current having a magnitude  $M \cdot I_b$ ;
- a reference transistor, coupled to said first and second  
 current replication circuitry, that receives said branch  
 current as an input current and conducts said first  
 replica current as an output current; and
- output transistor circuitry, coupled to said second current  
 replication circuitry, that receives said second replica  
 current and in response thereto generates an output  
 current having a magnitude  $M \cdot N \cdot I_{ref}$ .
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first current  
 replication circuitry comprises:
- first circuit branch that conducts said reference current;  
 and
- second circuit branch, coupled to said first circuit branch  
 that provides said first replica current.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said second current  
 replication circuitry comprises:
- third circuit branch, coupled to said second circuit branch,  
 that receives said bias signal and in response thereto  
 generates said branch current; and
- fourth circuit branch, coupled to said first circuit branch,  
 that receives said bias signal and in response thereto  
 generates said second replica current.
4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein:
- said third circuit branch includes a first serially coupled  
 circuit element having a resistance magnitude  $M \cdot R$ ;  
 and
- said fourth circuit branch includes a second serially  
 coupled circuit element having a resistance magnitude  
 $R$ .
5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first current  
 replication circuitry comprises current mirror circuitry.
6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said second current  
 replication circuitry comprises:
- first circuit branch that receives said bias signal and in  
 response thereto generates said branch current; and
- second circuit branch, coupled to said first circuit branch,  
 that receives said bias signal and in response thereto  
 generates said second replica current.
7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein:
- said first circuit branch includes a first serially coupled  
 circuit element having a resistance magnitude  $M \cdot R$ ;  
 and
- said second circuit branch includes a second serially  
 coupled circuit element having a resistance magnitude  
 $R$ .
8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said second current  
 replication circuitry comprises a shunt capacitance coupled  
 to said second circuit branch.
9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said second current  
 replication circuitry comprises current mirror circuitry.
10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said output trans-  
 istor circuitry comprises  $M$  transistors, wherein each one of  
 said  $M$  transistors is substantially equal in size to said  
 reference transistor.

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11. An apparatus including biasing circuitry for generat-  
 ing and maintaining a substantially constant output bias  
 current notwithstanding variations in circuit fabrication  
 processes, power supply voltage and operating temperature,  
 comprising:
- first current replicator means for receiving a reference  
 current having a magnitude  $I_{ref}$  and in response thereto  
 generating  
 a bias signal, and  
 a first replica current having a magnitude  $N \cdot I_{ref}$ ;
- second current replicator means for receiving said bias  
 signal and in response thereto generating  
 a branch current having a magnitude  $I_b$ , and  
 a second replica current having a magnitude  $M \cdot I_b$ ; and
- reference transistor means for receiving said branch cur-  
 rent as an input current and conducting said first replica  
 current as an output current.
12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said current  
 replicator means comprises:
- first circuit means for conducting said reference current,  
 and
- second circuit means for providing said first replica  
 current.
13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said second  
 current replicator means comprises:
- third circuit means for receiving said bias signal and in  
 response thereto generating said branch current; and
- fourth circuit means for receiving said bias signal and in  
 response thereto generating said second replica current.
14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein:
- said third circuit means is further for providing a first  
 series resistance having a magnitude  $M \cdot R$ ; and
- said fourth circuit means is further for providing a second  
 series resistance having a magnitude  $R$ .
15. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said second  
 current replicator means comprises:
- first circuit means for receiving said bias signal and in  
 response thereto generating said branch current; and
- second circuit means for receiving said bias signal and in  
 response thereto generating said second replica current.
16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein:
- said first circuit means is further for providing a first series  
 resistance having a magnitude  $M \cdot R$ ; and
- said second circuit means is further for providing a second  
 series resistance having a magnitude  $R$ .
17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said second  
 current replicator means is further for providing a shunt  
 capacitance for said second circuit means.
18. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising output  
 transistor means for receiving said second replica current  
 and in response thereto generating an output current having  
 a magnitude  $M \cdot N \cdot I_{ref}$ .

\* \* \* \* \*

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
**CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION**

PATENT NO. : 6,741,119 B1  
DATED : May 25, 2004  
INVENTOR(S) : Aude et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 5,

Lines 33 and 50, please delete “apparats” and replace with -- apparatus --.

Column 6,

Line 19, after the word “said”, please add the word -- first --.

Signed and Sealed this

Eleventh Day of October , 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon W. Dudas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

JON W. DUDAS

*Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office*